

DATE: November 29, 2002  
TO: Kamyar Guivetchi  
FROM: Alex Hildebrand  
RE: IFPRI report

Thank you for sending me information regarding the food and water publications of the International Food Policy Research Institute. I have read the shorter report. They highlight the difficulty of feeding the world in 2025 due primarily to water shortage. They recognize that the production of food is the largest human need for water and that water scarcity will drive up the cost of both water and food. They postulate that on a worldwide basis we will have to further increase the acreage of rain fed agriculture in producing cereals. They recognize the need to stop the reliance on groundwater overdraft. Their specific forecasts can not be as reliable as they are presented. However, they provide interesting hypotheses.

In considering the applicability of their hypotheses to California we must recognize several points:

1. California does not have much land that has suitable soil and enough rainfall to raise rain fed cereal crops and that is not already in use.
2. Cereal crops are not among California's principle crops except as rotation crops and rice crops which have to be irrigated.
3. In our climate irrigated crops produce much more per acre than rain fed crops, and more than rain fed crops produce elsewhere.
4. In our climate irrigated crops provide a much more reliable food supply than rain fed crops during dry periods.
5. California's farmers have already implemented most of the improvements in efficiency that the report recommends.

The Agricultural Issue Center can appropriately consider the report. However, I am not clear why the report justifies a Section in Chapter 5. The AIC report is committed to be in the Water Plan appendix but not in the text. I have seen no commitment to include in the Water Plan an agricultural water supply that is adequate to produce an adequate food supply. The AIC report, therefore, appears to be an interesting academic exercise that will not result in planning for an adequate water supply.